Case 1:23-mi-99999-UNA Document 4200 Filed 12/18/23 Page 1 of 10 JS44 (Rev. 10/2020 NDGA)

The JS44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket record. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED)

I. (a) PLAINTIFF(S) Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and Wells Fargo Delaware Trust Company, N.A.		DEFENDANT(S) Brian Achenbach, Nancy Belser, Andrew Costanza, Andrew Darrow, David Darrow, Jonathan Darrow, Dean Flock, Jay Grimm, Jr., Robert Krakovitz, Moshe Malka, Leon Malnik, Barry Septimus, and Phyllis Sifen	
(b) COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)		COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED DEFENDANT (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED	
(c) ATTORNEYS (FIRM NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND E-MAIL ADDRESS) Terry R. Weiss, Esq. Ga. Bar No. 746495 trweiss@duanemorris.com Duane Morris, LLP 1075 Peachtree Street NE, Ste 1700, Atlanta, GA 30309		ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN) Saskia Olczak, Esq. Ga. Bar No. 686983 Cozen O'Connor, 1230 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 400 Atlanta, GA 30309 Tel. 404-572-2099	
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)		ZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES "X" IN ONE BOX FOR PLAINTIFF AND ONE BOX FOR DEFENDANT) (FOR DIVERSITY CASES ONLY)	
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8 LITIGATION - DIRECT FILE			
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Case 1:23-mi-99999-UNA Document 4200 Filed 12/18/23 Page 2 of 10

VI. NATURE OF SUIT (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)

NTRACT - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 150 RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENT &	CIVIL DIGUTS "A" MONTUS DISCOVEDY TRACK	SOCIAL SECURITY - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY
	CIVIL RIGHTS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 440 OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS	TRACK
ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENT	441 VOTING	861 HIA (1395ff)
152 RECOVERY OF DEFAULTED STUDENT	442 EMPLOYMENT	862 BLACK LUNG (923)
LOANS (Excl. Veterans) 153 RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENT OF	443 HOUSING/ ACCOMMODATIONS445 AMERICANS with DISABILITIES - Employment	863 DIWC (405(g)) 863 DIWW (405(g))
VETERAN'S BENEFITS	446 AMERICANS with DISABILITIES - Other	864 SSID TITLE XVI
FRACT - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK	448 EDUCATION	865 RSI (405(g))
✓ 110 INSURANCE		FEDERAL TAX SUITS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY
120 MARINE	IMMIGRATION - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK	TRACK
☐ 130 MILLER ACT ☐ 140 NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT	462 NATURALIZATION APPLICATION 465 OTHER IMMIGRATION ACTIONS	870 TAXES (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) 871 IRS - THIRD PARTY 26 USC 7609
151 MEDICARE ACT	403 OTHER IMMIGRATION ACTIONS	671 IKS - 111KD 1 AKT 1 20 CSC 7007
160 STOCKHOLDERS' SUITS	PRISONER PETITIONS - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY	OTHER STATUTES - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY
190 OTHER CONTRACT 195 CONTRACT PRODUCT LIABILITY	TRACK 463 HABEAS CORPUS- Alien Detainee	TRACK 375 FALSE CLAIMS ACT
196 FRANCHISE	510 MOTIONS TO VACATE SENTENCE	376 Qui Tam 31 USC 3729(a)
DROBERTY ### MONTHS DISCOVERY	530 HABEAS CORPUS	400 STATE REAPPORTIONMENT
PROPERTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY	535 HABEAS CORPUS DEATH PENALTY 540 MANDAMUS & OTHER	430 BANKS AND BANKING 450 COMMERCE/ICC RATES/ETC.
210 LAND CONDEMNATION	550 CIVIL RIGHTS - Filed Pro se	460 DEPORTATION
220 FORECLOSURE	555 PRISON CONDITION(S) - Filed Pro se 560 CIVIL DETAINEE: CONDITIONS OF	470 RACKETEER INFLUENCED AND CORRUPT
230 RENT LEASE & EJECTMENT 240 TORTS TO LAND	CONFINEMENT	ORGANIZATIONS 480 CONSUMER CREDIT
245 TORT PRODUCT LIABILITY		485 TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT
290 ALL OTHER REAL PROPERTY	PRISONER PETITIONS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY	490 CABLE/SATELLITE TV
S - PERSONAL INJURY - "4" MONTHS	TRACK 550 CIVIL RIGHTS - Filed by Counsel	890 OTHER STATUTORY ACTIONS 891 AGRICULTURAL ACTS
OVERY TRACK	555 PRISON CONDITION(S) - Filed by Counsel	893 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS
310 AIRPLANE	FORFEITURE/PENALTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY	895 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 899
315 AIRPLANE PRODUCT LIABILITY 320 ASSAULT, LIBEL & SLANDER	TRACK	899 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT / REVIEW OR APPEAL OF AGENCY DECISION
330 FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY	625 DRUG RELATED SEIZURE OF PROPERTY	950 CONSTITUTIONALITY OF STATE STATUTES
340 MARINE 345 MARINE PRODUCT LIABILITY	21 USC 881 690 OTHER	
350 MOTOR VEHICLE	—	OTHER STATUTES - "8" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK
355 MOTOR VEHICLE PRODUCT LIABILITY	LABOR - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK	410 ANTITRUST
360 OTHER PERSONAL INJURY 362 PERSONAL INJURY - MEDICAL	☐ 710 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT ☐ 720 LABOR/MGMT. RELATIONS	850 SECURITIES / COMMODITIES / EXCHANGE
MALPRACTICE	740 RAILWAY LABOR ACT	
365 PERSONAL INJURY - PRODUCT LIABILITY	751 FAMILY and MEDICAL LEAVE ACT	OTHER STATUTES - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK
367 PERSONAL INJURY - HEALTH CARE/ PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT LIABILITY	790 OTHER LABOR LITIGATION 791 EMPL. RET. INC. SECURITY ACT	896 ARBITRATION
368 ASBESTOS PERSONAL INJURY PRODUCT	—	(Confirm / Vacate / Order / Modify)
LIABILITY	PROPERTY RIGHTS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK	
TS - PERSONAL PROPERTY - "4" MONTHS	820 COPYRIGHTS	
OVERY TRACK	840 TRADEMARK	* PLEASE NOTE DISCOVERY
370 OTHER FRAUD 771 TRUTH IN LENDING	880 DEFEND TRADE SECRETS ACT OF 2016 (DTSA)	TRACK FOR EACH CASE
380 OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE	PROPERTY RIGHTS - "8" MONTHS DISCOVERY	TYPE. SEE LOCAL RULE 26.3
385 PROPERTY DAMAGE PRODUCT LIABILITY	TRACK	TITE SEE EGGIE ROBE 2013
KRUPTCY - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK	830 PATENT	
422 APPEAL 28 USC 158	S35 PATENT-ABBREVIATED NEW DRUG APPLICATIONS (ANDA) - a/k/a	
423 WITHDRAWAL 28 USC 157	Hatch-Waxman cases	
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SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA ATLANTA DIVISION

Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and	
Wells Fargo Delaware Trust)	
Company, N.A.,	
)	
Plaintiffs,	
)	
v.)	
)	
Brian Achenbach, Nancy Belser,)	Civil Action No.:
Andrew Costanza, Andrew Darrow,)	CIVII / ICTION 110
David Darrow, Jonathan Darrow,)	
Dean Flock, Jay Grimm, Jr., Robert)	
Krakovitz, Moshe Malka, Leon)	
Malnik, Barry Septimus, and Phyllis)	
Sifen)	
)	
,	
Defendants.	

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Defendants, Brian Achenbach, Nancy Belser, Andrew Costanza, Andrew Darrow, David Darrow, Jonathan Darrow, Dean Flock, Jay Grimm, Jr., Robert Krakovitz, Moshe Malka, Leon Malnik, Barry Septimus, and Phyllis Sifen ("Defendants"), hereby remove this action from the Georgia State-Wide Business Court, State of Georgia, to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1332, 1441, and 1446. In support of this Removal, Defendants state:

1. On or about December 1, 2023, Plaintiffs, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and Wells Fargo Delaware Trust Company, N.A. ("Wells Fargo" or "Plaintiffs"),

commenced an action in the Georgia State-Wide Business Court, State of Georgia, by filing a Complaint captioned *Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and Wells Fargo Del. Trust Co., N.A. v. Achenbach, et al.*, Case No. 23-GSBC-0013 (Ga. Bus. Ct.) ("the State Court Action"). Attached hereto as Exhibit A is the Complaint.

- 2. The Complaint follows the initiation of an arbitration filed by Defendants¹ on October 10, 2023 with the American Arbitration Association ("AAA")—captioned *Achenbach et al. v. Liberty One Funding Trust, Liberty Two Funding Trust, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and Wells Fargo Del. Trust Co., N.A.*, AAA Case No. 01-23-0004-4523 (the "Arbitration").
- 3. The Complaint and the related Summons from the State Court Action were sent to Defendants' counsel on December 1, 2023, and an Acknowledgement of Service was filed in the State Court Action with regard to the Defendants² on December 15, 2023.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446(a), true and correct copies of all process, pleadings, and orders that have been served on Defendants in the State Court Action

¹ The Arbitration was filed on behalf of all Defendants except Brian Achenbach. The Arbitration was brought by, among others, Bruce Achenbach with regarding to claims stemming from a life insurance policy taken out on his father, Walter Achenbach. Unfortunately, Bruce Achenbach recently passed away and any claims stemming from the policy on Walter Achenbach are being pursued by Brian Achenbach, Walter's other son and Bruce's brother and sole surviving next of kin.

² Again, the Acknowledgement of Service was filed on behalf of all Defendants except Brian Achenbach because Brian Achenbach was not a named defendant in the State Court Action.

are attached hereto. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is Plaintiffs' contemporaneously-filed Motion and Memorandum to Stay the Arbitration with the accompanying Declaration. Attached hereto as Exhibit C is the docket. Attached hereto as Exhibit D are the summons directed to Defendants. Attached hereto as Exhibit E is Plaintiffs' Motion and Memorandum to Seal Exhibits to the Complaint. Attached hereto as Exhibit F is Plaintiffs' Corporate Disclosure Statement. Attached hereto as Exhibit G is the Order Granting Plaintiffs' Motions to Seal. Attached hereto as Exhibit H is Defendants' Acknowledgment of Service. Attached hereto as Exhibit I is the Georgia State-wise Business Court Case Information Form. Attached hereto as Exhibit J is are the *Pro Hac Vice* Motions of Wells Fargo's counsel and the orders granting those motions.

- 5. The time for filing this Notice of Removal under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b) has therefore not yet expired.
- 6. Removal of this action is based on 28 U.S.C. § 1441 in that this is a civil action brought in a State court over which the district courts have original jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1332 because (i) there is complete diversity and (ii) there is a federal question.
- 7. First, the removal of this action is based on the grounds that complete diversity of citizenship exists between the parties and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs.

- 8. There is complete diversity of citizenship between Plaintiffs and Defendants because:
- A. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., is a national banking association with its main office in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Wells Fargo is a citizen of South Dakota.
- B. Wells Fargo Delaware Trust Company, N.A. is a national banking association with its main office in Wilmington, Delaware. Wells Fargo is a citizen of Delaware.
 - C. Defendant Brian Achenbach is a citizen of California;
 - D. Defendant Nancy Belser is a citizen of Tennessee;
 - E. Defendant Andrew Costanza is a citizen of New York;
 - F. Defendant Andrew Darrow is a citizen of South Carolina;
 - G. Defendant David Darrow is a citizen of Virginia;
 - H. Defendant Jonathan Darrow is a citizen of California;
 - I. Defendant Dean Flock is a citizen of Oregon;
 - J. Defendant Jay Grimm, Jr. is a citizen of New York;
 - K. Defendant Robert Krakovitz is a citizen of Colorado;
 - L. Defendant Moshe Malka is a citizen of New Jersey;
 - M. Defendant Leon Malnik is a citizen of Maryland;
 - N. Defendant Barry Septimus is a citizen of New York; and

- O. Defendant Phyllis Sifen is a citizen of Florida;
- 9. Based upon the allegations in the Complaint, the amount in controversy in this action exceeds the sum of \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs.
- 10. Second, removal of this action is also based on the grounds that the State Court Action presents a federal question.
- 11. Plaintiffs' Complaint seeks, *inter alia*, to stay the Arbitration—pursuant to Georgia Arbitration Code O.C.G.A. § 9-9-6(b)(1)—and seeks a declaration that the Defendants' claims in the Arbitration are time-barred—pursuant to Georgia Arbitration Code O.C.G.A. § 9-9-5—under Georgia law. *See* Complaint ¶¶ 30-51. Yet, the Federal Arbitration Act ("FAA"), not the Georgia Arbitration Code, controls.
- 12. Defendants' claims in the Arbitration center around illegal human life wagering policies that were effectuated by way of Financing Agreements, which contain the applicable arbitration clauses. *See* Complaint ¶¶ 29-30.
- 13. Because the transactions at issue here constitute interstate commerce, the FAA controls the parties' dispute. *SunTrust Bank v. Lilliston*, 809 S.E.2d 819, 822 (Ga. 2018) ("The [FAA] applies in state and federal courts to all contracts containing an arbitration clause that involves or affects interstate commerce.") (quoting *American Gen. Financial Svcs. v. Jape* 732 S.E.2d 746 (Ga. 2012)) (cleaned up).

- 14. Despite the FAA clearly governing, Plaintiffs' argue—in their Motion to Stay that was filed contemporaneously with the Complaint—that the Georgia Arbitration Code ("GAC"), not the FAA, govern. Plaintiff's Motion to Stay at 9-12. Indeed, Plaintiffs argue so despite black and white precedent that "the state [Georgia] arbitration law, due to preemption by the federal arbitration code when interstate commerce is involved, will never be applicable where one party is not from Georgia" [*Tampa Motel Management Co. v. Stratton of Fla.*, 366 S.E. 2d 804, 807 (Ga. Ct. App. 1988)], and despite the high burden that the GAC may only displace the FAA if the arbitration clause between the parties evidences "a clear intent by the parties that the [GAC] . . . control[s]." *Gulfstream Aero. Corp. v. Oceltip Aviation 1 Pty. Ltd.*, 31 F.4th 1323, 1331 (11th Cir. 2022).
- 15. In fact, Plaintiffs fail to even mention the FAA in the Complaint. *See generally*, Complaint. In this way, Plaintiffs attempted an artful pleading which fails to mention a key federal preemption question in the Complaint, yet devotes significant space to that very issue in the contemporaneously-filed Motion to Stay. Of course, the artful pleading doctrine does not allow a plaintiff to "defeat removal by omitting to plead necessary federal questions." *Rivet v. Regions Bank*, 522 U.S. 470, 475 (1998) ("If a court concludes that a plaintiff has 'artfully pleaded' claims . . . , it may uphold removal even though no federal question appears on the face of

the plaintiff's complaint. The artful pleading doctrine allows removal

where federal law completely preempts a plaintiff's state-law claim.") (cleaned up).

16. Further, a federal question also exists on the face of the Complaint by

way of Plaintiffs' argument that Defendants' federal RICO claims are time-barred

under federal law. See Complaint ¶ 41.

17. Venue is proper in the United States District Court for the Northern

District of Georgia, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), because a substantial part of

the events or omissions giving rise to this action occurred in this district and division,

and at least one of the parties conducts business in, and may be found in, this district

and division.

18. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1446(d), a copy of this Notice of Removal and

a Notice of Filing Notice of Removal is being filed with the Georgia State-Wide

Business Court, State of Georgia and is being served on Plaintiffs' counsel.

WHEREFORE, having fulfilled all statutory requirements, Defendants

remove the State Court Action, and request that this Court assume full jurisdiction

over the matter as provided by law, and permit this action to proceed before it as a

matter properly removed thereto.

Respectfully submitted this 18th day of December, 2023.

/s/ Saskia Olczak

Saskia Olczak, Esq.

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Ga. Bar No. 686983 1230 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 400 Atlanta, GA 30309 Tel. 404-572-2099 Fax 404-572-2199 COZEN O'CONNOR

CERTIFICATION: The above-signed counsel hereby certifies that this document was prepared in Times New Roman 14-point font in accordance with LR 5.1B, N.D. Ga.